

THE QUIVER

Saturday, April 13, 1867.



(Drawn by C. J. STANILAND.)

"The mother sat binding boots."—p. 463.

"ROUND THE COURT."

BY A RENT-COLLECTOR.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

INTRODUCTIONS are awkward things, unless one is used to society. In a first chapter one must make a few, but here they shall be as few

and as informal as possible. For instance, I need not introduce myself. If I did, it would be necessary to give an account of the why, when, and how I became a rent-collector. What does it matter

whether I am a retired tradesman, getting in the revenues of my "little property," or a philanthropist, with a hobby for supplanting middlemen? One of the foremost men of letters in London is the proprietor of what was once the most squalid court in a most squalid quarter of the great city. He pays himself a fair interest for his money, about five per cent. I believe—nothing like the interest such property is made to pay—and the surplus he spends in improvements, for he has not lowered the rents. The rooms inside and the walls outside have been painted, cleansed, whitewashed; the water-taps and cisterns mended; and in such places they are usually in such bad repair that a constant supply of water is impossible. Last of all, a nest of old stables and cellars, which stood in the middle of the court, leaving only a narrow passage between them and the houses, and absolutely stifling the inhabitants, has been cleared away, and light and air let in; and, better still, the space has been walled, as a playground for the little girls, to save them, in some small measure, from the terrible contaminations of the neighbourhood. Mr. Ruskin does not collect the rents himself, but his agent is a young lady, whose active and wise benevolence finds employment in the task for some hours every week.

But to return from this little digression. I need not name the locality in which the scene of my labours stands, or very recently stood. It is not a hundred miles from St. Paul's; but you would never find it out by any description, because there are hundreds exactly like it. Besides, there is nothing worth seeking there; nothing old, nothing new, and certainly nothing beautiful. As for the court, there are thousands just the same. You pass under, and over, and through the middle of them on the lines that, like the spokes of a huge wheel, radiate from the centre of London to its wide rim of suburbs; and as for the residents, I may say that, as a rule, they consider themselves respectable people. I am not sure that Jones the publican would allow it, for they wear their best clothes always, for want of any better, and would not be allowed to sit down in the bar-parlour; nor Timbs the grocer, for they don't go to church as often as they might or ought, and would certainly not be offered a seat in his pew if they did. But they are not criminals, and they are not paupers. They have a wholesome horror of the workhouse and the prison, and of the former even more than the latter. They may not, at first sight, appear so interesting as convicts and casuals; but then people know all about convicts and casuals, and they know little or nothing about honest working people. They would not make so many mistakes about them if they did know them: put their wages all together in a lump, and forget how many mouths

they have to feed and backs to clothe and heads to hold a roof over: speak about what they should save, and forget what they must spend. They might complain, if they had a voice, with the North Country smith, who said, "A' body speaks o' my drinkin', but naebody speaks o' my drouth;" not that I uphold their thriftless ways and drinking customs, they are the ruin of them; but it is only fair to show how hard their battle is to keep sober, and before the world. They have to struggle, not with poverty only, but with sickness, and weakness, and weariness, and "bad times," and "knocking about;" and, at the root of all, with ignorance and want of guidance. If Christ wept over Jerusalem, how think you would he feel about London? If he had compassion on the thousands hungering for a few hours on the green hills of Galilee, what about the tens of thousands who are always hungered in the great city, and who are in very truth as sheep having no shepherd?

In the true sense of the word "respectable," many of the poorest of the poor are respectable in the highest degree; worthy of respect for greater virtues and higher qualities than it has entered into the heart of Jones and Timbs to conceive—I mean my particular Jones and Timbs; for, if I meant Jones and Timbs to represent publicans and grocers in general, I should be falling into the fault I reprobate—that of dealing with men in classes according to outward distinctions. There are varieties of men who may be classed together, but they are found in all ranks and conditions. Circumstances may bring forth certain faults in certain conditions, but then it may also produce an abundant crop of the opposite virtues; and, of course, if a class is very large, you may gather your varieties out of it alone, only you have no right to speak as if such specimens of humanity existed in no other class. The varieties I encountered were nearly as numerous as the individuals, but then the area was very small. This was, however, compensated by the fluctuations among the residents.

The court stood at the back of a leading thoroughfare—a long, ugly street, with rather high houses, and shops on the ground floors. Every third shop sold something eatable, and nearly every sixth appeared to be a drinking-shop. Behind the thoroughfare there were acres of crowded dwellings, studded thickly with workshops and small factories. In front of it, shutting it in, was a pawnbroker's on the one side and a tobacconist's on the other. The houses within had no outlook except into the court itself. They were built back to back, a perfect contrivance for the exclusion of air and the manufacture of fever. At the foot rose a high dead wall, and in one corner was the general dustbin, redolent in summer of fearful odours.

This was how it looked on the day of my first visit. It was a Monday morning in spring. There was a forlorn brightening up of things to greet the spring sunshine. Some of the inhabitants had whitewashed the step or two by which each house was entered, some had even gone so far as to whiten their window-sills. Narrow, and sometimes ragged, bits of muslin screening the lower panes of the windows had been washed, and the windows themselves cleaned to brightness. Others had suffered the grime of winter to remain untouched, forming, as far as the windows were concerned, a sufficient screen of itself. The children were playing in the court, or sitting on the steps. They swarmed—mere infants for the most part. It was early in the day, and all the bigger and more discord-loving of the youthful population were absent. The men and boys were at work; the women and the little ones "at home." I stood a few minutes looking at the tiny creatures tottering round in a ring, and seeming, for the most part, feeble and sickly, and nearly all fearfully and wonderfully dirty. One little fellow attracted my attention particularly. He was not playing, but sitting on a step on which there fell a few flakes of sunshine. He had one arm wound affectionately round a pot of primroses, in which the flowers were fading fast; but the leaves still showed their vivid and tender green; brighter they seemed there than on the bare brown bank, or among the last year's leaves, where they love to grow. What a queer old face the child had! quite white to the lips; with soiled fair hair, and very wide nostrils, and a large and heavy, but expressive mouth. Indeed, when he smiled he seemed all mouth and eyes. His eyes were pale in colour, only you could not tell what colour; but they lighted up his face with a look of super-human intelligence. When you looked closer, you saw that they had long golden lashes, and that above them lay two pale yellow streaks of eyebrow that added to the weird expression of the face. He held his pot, and smiled up to some one at one of the back windows of the big house in front. I followed his eyes, and saw a young woman shaking a heap of long black ringlets, and sparkling with brassy-looking brooches and chains. Afterwards I learned the history of little Joe and his pot. It had been given to him by Rebecca, the tobacconist's daughter, for whose smile he was waiting there, and who, with her curls and brooches, was to Joe grand as any princess of the East. She had an impulsive kindness of nature, and she saw little Joe look wistfully at her one day as she brought home a bunch of spring flowers. The little fellow was looking out at the great world from the entrance of the court. A week after she had seen him pick them tenderly out of the general receptacle of filth and rubbish, wash them in an old

jelly-can, and try to set them up again. So the next time she bought some from a basket in the street, she came into the court and presented him with a white narcissus, which he looked at with his mouth wide open in admiring awe, and held as if he had been holding a taper at an altar. At last she gave him her pot of primroses before they quite faded. To this born worshipper of beauty, cast into a lot where ugliness predominated, it was as if she had given a kingdom. He carried it about in his arms. The leaves delighted him long after the flowers were gone, and the flowers might have come again to delight him another spring if he had been there to watch them. As it was, that pot gave him all the proud feelings of a landed proprietor; and, to make the most of it, he set four peas in the corners, only he would take them up to see what progress they were making, so that they did not come to much.

I was not admitted to many interiors on my first visit. Most of the doors were half-way opened to learn my business, and left in that condition, till the housewives (some of whom I was to know well enough hereafter) went to fetch the weekly sum, from two to four shillings. They were then closed on me again as speedily as possible. But at the top of one stair the door opened before I had time to tap, and a little girl came out, carrying a baby in her arms, from one of which hung a pretty large basket. The girl could not have been more than seven, and my first impulse was to snatch the infant from certain destruction, as its bearer staggered beneath the burden toward the steep and narrow stairs. But she did not seem disposed to allow of such an unwarrantable interference, for gathering her strength, she shouldered the baby into a higher and still more unsafe position, and getting past me, began to descend, favouring me with a stare out of her dark, bewildered-looking eyes. I saw her safe into the court, baby, basket, and all, and then proceeded to business. The house of six apartments was divided among as many tenants save one; the ground floor being occupied by one tenant, who required two rooms for a family of no fewer than eleven souls. There I had met with the kind of reception recorded above.

With a glance at the roll I carried, I knocked at the first door on the next floor, and was at once admitted, and offered a chair by the little old lady who opened the door. The room was very small, and so was everything in it, including its occupant. Her waist was of such slender proportions, that I marvelled how the internal machinery found room to play in such narrow space. There was a small bed in a corner, a small table near the window, and a number of small articles on a shelf, including a tiny teapot. Everything about the little lady was neat and clean, as she was herself.

She was very communicative, told me that she had been a nursery governess "in the best of families," and, after I had examined the perfection of the stitching she was doing—for her eyes were as good, she informed me, as when she was seventeen—she wrapped up her two shillings in a bit of paper, presented them to me, and allowed me to depart. Bright little woman! She was as dependent on those clear eyes of hers for picking up her little living, as the sparrow on the house-top is on his; and she was nearly as unanxious, and cheerful, and spry.

My second knock was answered by a voice from within. While I hesitated, "Come in" was reiterated, but not impatiently. I opened the door, and entering, at once recognised the mother of the little woman with the baby and the basket. She had the same pale skin and great dark eyes, but her face was very thin and worn. At her feet sat a quiet, motionless child, a boy about four years old, staring with the eyes again. The room was almost empty. The mother sat binding boots, and she had kept her seat, that she might not hinder her work. A shoemaker's stool and implements stood in the window, indicating the father's craft, who was, doubtless, at that moment celebrating St. Monday, in one of the neighbouring public-houses. As soon as I told her my errand, she rose and gave me the money without a word, and I gave her good morrow, and left her. I had not closed the door, when I heard the click of her needle on the stiff seam.

Going up another stair, I was again admitted, though the decent old couple who lived there were evidently sitting down, at nearly noon, to their first meal. The bit of fire in the grate had just cooked two herrings; and two cups of tea, without milk, stood on the table with a little dark sugar in a basin, and a half-quartern loaf. A bench, in which a vice was fixed, stood in the window here,

and a heap of shavings were swept into a corner. But I could not linger, though, as I received the rent, I looked in their faces, and would gladly have returned it; only I had been warned, that any proceeding of that kind, would turn all my tenants into beggars, and worse. One day, I would have been glad if I had given that, and all the payments that followed, back into those wrinkled and trembling hands. In the summer, the old couple were able to live; the husband making strong, white wooden toys; the carts, and wheelbarrows, and spades, which children prize so much at the sea-side, or in the garden, and which, in summer, are in great demand. I dare say they are made by hundreds in some factory, but he had his customers, and his work was strong and good; and the old woman was kept trudging, with half-a-dozen articles at a time, to the shops he worked for all the summer through. But the winters were bad. At first, for his better customers, he was employed in making up a few things for stock, and little parlour toys made a brisk sale at Christmas-time, and gave them a dinner on Christmas Day; but in the early months of the year, there was pinching poverty to be suffered. Next year, at that time, there was a sudden death in the little room: the old man found dead in his bed, and his old wife wringing her hands, with the tears frozen in her eyes. Then there was an inquest, and the jury found their verdict of disease, "accelerated by want of the necessaries of life." They had been living, for weeks, on weak tea and dry bread; and when the old woman was asked why they did not go into the workhouse, rather than suffer such privation, she answered, "Me and my man have lived together for fifty years, and we wern't going to be separated at last, till Him that joined us together, put us asunder."

(To be continued.)

MAN AS A RELIGIOUS CREATURE.

THE phenomena of existence embody certain ideals, which they reveal to intellects of a congenial nature. For the heedless, and those not given to contemplation, they have no existence, and, to their minds, the facts of history and experience reflect no higher realities—exhibit no types or exemplars of more exalted truth. Even minds of a more philosophic and contemplative cast require a purity of vision, and an earnestness of seeking, to discover the ideals, oftentimes faintly and confusedly, yet not the less really, shadowed forth by the phenomena of experience.

This applies in an eminent degree to the

beliefs of humanity, which—notwithstanding all the Positivist might say to the contrary—are as much facts in Nature as anything else, and, as such, have their cause and their sufficient reason. Every phase of humanity, even the most debased, reflects in its belief the broken and distorted images of higher truth; and it is the shallowest of all philosophies which would ignore or scoff at these beliefs because of the disagreeable or superstitious forms in which they are frequently exhibited. The true philosopher will recognise the religious instincts and feelings of some sort existing in the human breast as so many indications of man's higher destiny, and of his relation to something beyond and above himself. In the

grovelling superstitions of the savage, not less than in the theogonies of refined Greece and Rome, he will perceive the same idea embodied, and struggling to manifest itself.

There are some who think this sympathy with the invisible, this sense of dependence, dishonouring to the dignity of humanity, and the offspring of its causeless terrors in a state of barbarism and subjection to the powers of external Nature—feelings destined to fade away before the increase of knowledge and the discovery of what were previously the mysterious secrets of Nature. Far more true, and more just to the grandeur of man, it would be to regard them as utterances—broken utterances they may be—of feelings peculiar to him, feelings which distinguish him from the inferior creation, and which testify to his lofty origin. Man upon this earth is weak and feeble, whether he believes himself to be so or not; and the more weak and feeble, the more he is ignorant of the fact. That it is possible for him to become conscious of his condition, and convinced of the inferiority of his position—this, by implying a comparison of himself with something higher in himself—this it is which stamps the true dignity upon his nature, and makes him the immortal creature that he is. This is the sympathetic chord of union between himself and the higher world, the link which joins on his own existence to another and a higher existence with which he feels it to be connected. The feeling of dependence is thus one of the noblest elements in the composition of man; and the philosopher, if he would but regard the matter dispassionately, could not fail to perceive it to be so.

If any doubts ever existed as to the universality of this feeling, the researches of modern times have completely dissipated them. Travellers who were ignorant of the language of some tribes that they visited, might hastily conclude, from an imperfect examination, that there were some human beings who had no belief in a Being superior to themselves, nor a name by which to call him; but few will now be found to maintain that such is really the case. Even where a distinct name is wanting, the skilful examiner does not fail to detect that sense of incompleteness in itself, and of dependence on some higher Being, which exists in every human breast alike. The consciousness of its relation to such a Being, of whatever kind that relation be, is world-wide; and this it is that constitutes the foundation of religion. It may satisfy some to resolve the causes of our belief in the supernatural into fear; but deeper minds will ever reply, with Burke, "If fear created the gods, what created the fear?" Such a solution would but remove the difficulty one step backward: the origin of the fear would still have to be accounted for, and the explanation must lead us ultimately

to the contemplation of Him who has constituted us what we are. From the fact of the feeling being universally inherent in the nature of man, light breaks in upon the subject; from the profound depths of the constitution of humanity issues a voice which will not be drowned, which cannot be stifled, proclaiming man's kindred with the skies, and attesting that belief in a God, of which humanity never did and never can divest itself.

To this belief man clings in sorrow and in joy; deep answers to deep in his inner nature, attesting the feeling of dependence, and proclaiming that, through all the varied phases of his history and condition, he is essentially a religious creature. And this object of man's belief he in a certain sense knows. How far that knowledge can extend without any aid from Revelation is an important inquiry, and one which must be conducted with caution, and in a spirit of impartiality. We must not, on the one hand, in the interest of Revelation, depreciate natural theology and what it can teach us; nor, on the other, run into the error of those who would make Christianity as old as the creation, and would constitute man's mind the measure of all things. We should avoid the ridiculous extravagances of Theodore Parker, and his theory of "absolute religion" existing to such an extent in all the religions of the world as to render an external revelation superfluous; but we may not (as some well-meaning writers have done), without injustice, laugh to scorn the feeble utterances of the immortal spirit of humanity, and degrade man almost to the level of the beast that perisheth, in order to exalt the more the honour and importance of the written Word. The inner constitution of the brute creation may be one universal blank, with no capacity of apprehending the existence of a Supreme Being; but the constitution of man is not so. Neither in external Nature, nor in the inner nature of man, has God ever left himself without a witness; and to the honour of humanity it must be said that, even in its most besotted condition, it has not been altogether deaf to the testimony of that witness, or unknowing of the Being whose existence is thus attested.

It is not, then, a matter of necessity to appeal to external Nature in proof of the being of a God. Even though Nature were one vast, dreary waste—though beauty and order were not perceptible all around—though it were not possible to deduce the "eternal power and Godhead" of the Deity from the contemplation of "the things that are made," as it most assuredly is, yet man, in the microcosm of his own individual existence, has that which proclaims to him from the depths of his being that there is a God, and that on the will and power of that God he is dependent. To these not destitute of the ordinary faculties of

man, all external Nature, too, appeals with arguments of an irresistible cogency, tending to deepen still further the reliance placed on the spontaneous utterances of the heart. The heavens tell out the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork; the beauties of the soft and tender landscape, the sublimities of the mighty deep, the revolutions of the seasons, the divine harmony of all Nature's movements, pour sweet conviction on the soul. And should the observer set himself to think of how it all was formed, and to pursue the thought of his own existence backwards through the epochs of time, reason must still further deepen the conviction which the innate feeling of dependence first produced in him. Happy (Revelation apart) if he acquiesces in these first promptings of his unsophisticated nature, and in the primal conclusions of his unphilosophic

reason! Then, content with a simple belief in a great and powerful controlling Being, and obeying the directions of the inward monitor, conscience, his life might possibly be blameless and his lot happy. But this is an ideal picture. Man, apart from the influences of revealed religion, is either a philosopher or a savage. If the latter, then all the baser passions of his nature have gained the mastery over the good, the voice of conscience is scarcely heard, and the pure and simple belief which was conceivably within his reach, has degenerated into a cruel and revolting superstition. This is simply matter of fact. But if he be a philosopher, then the first unsophisticated utterances of his natural reason have not been acquiesced in; the philosophic spirit urges him on to attempt a solution of the insoluble problem of existence, and to find out the Deity unto perfection.

THE OLD SUN-DIAL.

A PARABLE. BY THE REV. RICHARD S. BROOKE, D.D.



IN a garden on the summit of a very fruitful hill there has stood for ages an old Sun-dial. Its history goes back nearly to the beginning of the world, yet time has had no influence over it, save to make it more venerable and more precious; and, like the great sea which washes the shores of earth, it has continued as fresh in its appearance, and as unimpaired in its integrity, as on the day it first came from the hand of its Creator.

Cut out of the solid rock, snowy and pure, it is dialled with fine brass, and its gnomon is of pure gold. It is admirable for the symmetry of its pillar, and the justness of its proportions; and its sun-plate is fixed and regulated by a hand of unerring skill; and, being accessible by countless pathways, which climb, at every side, the mount where it stands, it has proved a blessing and a comfort to the land and to the people among whom it is fixed, introducing laws of order and happy regularity amidst every household which consults it, and is satisfied to abide by its revelations.

Day by day the sun shines upon it steadily and warmly; and though clouds may arise from natural causes, or, at times, the art or hostility of man may call up mists and shadows around it, yet they soon pass away before Heaven's own radiance, which invests it with a continuous and undying splendour. And, strange and marvellous to relate, when night deepens down on the rest of the world; a bright glimmer from under the edge of the darkness ever falls on the face of this Dial, coming from the far outlying horizons of eternity, and cast-

ing faint but certain shadows on the sun-plate, significant of that great epoch, when time shall be dissolved into the infinite of a glorious and happy futurity.

And this Sun-dial has had many enemies, both in ancient and modern days. The great empire of Paganism hated it, and would have torn it up by the roots, and cast it into the dens and caves of the earth; but it was riveted so deeply in the Rock, that the efforts of its foes proved in vain; and pagans, ceasing to be so, came to consult it, and made it their oracle.

The Church of the Papacy, while affecting to treat it with honour, set up another dial in the great plain of Christendom. This they exalted in a gorgeous shrine, whereby the light of the sun was often intercepted from shining on it, and they called it "Infallible," and men and minds bowed down before it. Yet in time it was discovered that many of the deductions from the two dials led to opposite and conflicting results; and as the world grew wiser, many learned the truth and honesty of the older Sun-dial, and estimated it accordingly.

For before this period were "Dark Ages;" and the mass of mankind herded with Ignorance and her sister Superstition, and were slow to consult this expositor of the right, and in fact scarce knew where it was to be found; and their eyes were so bedimmed, that even had they discovered the old Sun-dial, they could scarce have been able to read its characters. Yet, some noble hearts there were—bright and faithful amid prevailing error, and favoured by God, and these sought out the

"fruitful hill," and sealed its summit, and basked in the light that shone there, and brought back luminous principles of harmony and of knowledge, and taught them to the awakening world; and thus numbers came to climb the pleasant mount, and gather round the ancient beauty of the Dial, taking their calculations from the sunlight and the shadow which alternated over its face, and esteeming its revelations even as the oracles of God; and ever since that it has been loved and honoured, and much resorted to; and still, from year to year, does Heaven's beam fall upon its face; and when every sun-dial upon earth has waxed grey and antiquated, or is choked with moss, or worn with weather; this ancient revealer of truth and of time stands erect and fair in the unimpaired perfection of its structure, and its sun-plate ever giving back in reflected beauty the radiance it receives from Heaven.

Yet it will scarce be credited that, in the very times we live in, enemies have essayed to burn the Sun-dial; but, like the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace, it came forth unharmed by the flames, nor had the smell of fire passed upon it.

Others, disputing its infallibility, have brought chisel and hammer to alter its shape, and the figures stamped upon its sun-plate, as well as to impugn their veracity; but, harder than the hardest adamant, the plate and the pillar have resisted injury, and broken the instruments brought to bear upon them, and palsied the arms that wielded them till they could strike no longer.

And thus, invincible and enduring, it ever stands as the great arbitrator and referee to the sons of men, correcting and regulating time, while it intimates and ensures eternity.

And because there is a virtue and a blessing in the place, hither may often come the heavy-laden heart and find rest, and a lifting off of its weight. The unhappy doubter, too, will climb the hill, and look upon the Sun-dial, and bring back conviction and light in his soul.

Here does the anxious watcher resort to inquire, "What of the night?"—this night of sin and strife—and sees the far glimmer of eternity on the Dial, and rejoiceth that "the morning cometh," when sorrow and sighing will flee away.

And hither will many a poor erring disciple ascend, bringing a sad and failing spirit for regulation, and correction in righteousness, and taking back the testimony of the old Sun-dial, as that which rejoiceth the heart and maketh wise the simple.

And on its base is engraved, "Given by inspiration of God;" and round its shaft is wreathed a shining scroll, on which is written, in Hebrew, and Syriac, and Greek—THE LAW, THE PROPHETS, THE EVANGELISTS, THE APOSTLES; and these letters, ever legible from the intensity of their own light, partake of the immortality of the Dial to which they belong, and whose character and nature they express; for the sun-plate was engraved by the hands of Deity, and the pillar was hewn from the Mount of God.

EVENING LIGHT.



AY—a happy harvest day—

Passes peaceful to its close;

Labour loiters, pauses play,

And for both awaits repose.

Over fields of gathered sheaves
Flocks of fleecy clouds have strayed;
Over bowers of autumn leaves
Gloom and gleam alternate played.

Now the skies on either hand
Part like seas, and clouds sail o'er,
To the golden pebbled strand
Of a white celestial shore.

Now the shore is growing grey!
All grows grey from east to west!
And half sad we turn away,
With a dim and vague unrest.

Turn again! the sun is low,
And a pale cloud, tinged with red,
Glows as swift as blushes glow,
Spreads as swift as blushes spread.

Caught from cloud to cloud, the flush
Deepens as it kindles still,—
In the west a burning blush,
Fainter on the eastern hill.

Swiftly too the glory fades—
Even as we gaze it dies;
Surely too the night invades,
And the rapture sinks in sighs.

Like a vision of the just
At his latter end it is—
Sober day of work and trust
Evening glow as grand as this.

Life and labour both are done,
Drawing near death's solemn night;
Yet, at setting of the sun,
At the even-time is light!

Back o'er all his life it streams,
All the round of life its sky;
Love is burning in its beams,
Hope is lighting him to die.

ISA CRAIG.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF THE ANTI-PAPAL MOVEMENT IN ITALY.

ORIGIN OF PAPAL THEOCRACY.



RAPID survey of the history of papal theocracy, especially with respect to the opposite tendencies, which from the Middle Ages down to our own days have fought against it in Italy, either on religious or civil grounds, appears to be a peculiarly important subject for the present time. The more so, if it be considered that the great movement of emancipation from the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome has reached the very centre of the hierarchy, and the papal system is falling to ruin on that same basis from which it first received its world-wide influence—namely, the capital of the Roman world. It is by taking a connected view of the growth, progress, and decay of an institution, in relation to the circumstances amidst which its various phases have unfolded themselves, that we can better understand its meaning, and assign to it its proper place in history. Its very origin, the events which called forth its action, the social, intellectual, and moral conditions which furthered its onward course, naturally lead us to comprehend the reason of its decline, when, through the change of ages, the state of things that bestowed upon it a function in the world, no longer exists. It seems, indeed, with respect to papal theocracy, as if a providential reversion of destinies were at work, to show the meral impossibility of an office which has fulfilled its purpose on earth, and has no longer any actual connection with the intellect and wants of mankind. The most enlightened supporters of the Church of Rome, knowing that the assumption of its divinely-appointed supremacy, through apostolic institution, was in absolute contradiction with the records of primitive Christianity, as well as with the constitution of the Church and the authority of the Fathers in the first three centuries, have endeavoured to draw a more plausible argument in favour of its sovereignty from the combination of historical circumstances which fostered its development. Such was the point of view of Bessuet, who saw in the progress of papal unity, through the concurrent agency of social and political causes, the work of Providence in history, and God's sanction to the authority of the Roman Church. The providential argument, however, in support of papal power, is not less liable to be discomfited on its own grounds, than the one based on the pretended apostolic ordination; because, fully admitting—as all great leaders of ancient and of modern thought have done—that the fundamental facts of history are the signs of a Divine law presiding

over the march of nations, it is clear that these same facts, and the circumstances of human progress, considered as symptoms of that law, must be equally authoritative when they tend to forsake, as when they tended to favour, any great institution of mankind. That the papal power did not succeed, more than any form of social or political organisation, in fixing itself permanently and universally on the mind and life of nations,—that, as soon as the latter reached a certain degree of intellectual and moral maturity, they protested against its pretensions, and actually worked out their various improvements independent of its guidance, are so many proofs that the papacy is simply a great historical fact, which has had its relative significance, and has done its work, under God's law of progress, in its proper time, and which may, therefore, be regarded and judged accordingly.

To those among our readers who are familiar, not only with the Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles, but with the writings of the early Fathers—Irenæus and Cyprian included—it is needless to record that the individual uncontrolled authority of the bishops over the clergy and laity of their respective congregations, and the supremacy of the Roman, or any other see, over the Christian community, were notions utterly extraneous to the spirit and government of the Church during the period of its original development. Even when, in the second and third centuries, the inner unity of the Christian conscience shaped itself outwardly into a more definite and settled form, the constitution of the Church assumed a federal, rather than a monarchical, character, not unmixed with a considerable residuum of the primitive Christian equality, and of the share of the people in religious affairs. "As late as the third century," says Neander, "the presbyters still maintained their own footing as a college of counsellors at the side of the bishops, and the latter undertook nothing of importance without assembling the council of presbyters."* The bishops were considered *primi inter pares*. "From the beginning of my episcopal functions," says Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in a letter to his clergy, "I determined to do nothing on my private judgment, without your advice."† Although the tendency to separate the priesthood, as a spiritually-privi-

* "History of the Christian Religion and Church." Bohn's Edition. Vol. I., p. 267.

† "A primordio episcopatus mei statui, nihil sine consilio vestro, mea privatim sententia, gerere."



(Drawn by M. E. EDWARDS.)

"Over fields of gathered sheaves
Flocks of fleecy clouds have strayed."—p. 471.

leged body, from the rest of the faithful, had already made, in those days, a remarkable advance, still the laity, the *plebs*, besides preserving its regular participation in the election of bishops, was often called to take part in ecclesiastical deliberations. Cyprian himself declares that he was always careful not to come to any important decision without the consent of the people—"sine consensu plebis."^{*} And the testimony of the Bishop of Carthage is the more decisive, the greater was his episcopal pride and his attachment to the hierarchical element in the Church.

Passing from the internal organisation of each congregation to the external relations between the different churches, we find, in the first two centuries, the principle of spiritual equality among them still prevalent to a great extent. The attempts early made by the Roman bishops to assert their primacy, as occupants of the *cathedra Petri*, were sternly resisted, even by those among their colleagues in the episcopate of the Catholic Church who were most deeply impressed with the conception of its outward unity as an indispensable condition for its welfare. Tertullian notices with wonder and reprobation the imperious tone of the Roman bishops in his days, issuing peremptory edicts, and styling themselves "Supreme Pontiffs" and "Bishops of bishops." When, in the year 190, Victor, Bishop of Rome, attributing to himself the right of supreme judgment in religious matters, as successor of St. Peter, excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor, because they dissented from him as regarded the time of celebrating Easter, Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote to the same that famous letter, which has ever since been a thorn in the flesh of Romish divines, and which may be considered as the first germ of Gallican independence. He severely rebuked Victor's un-Christian arrogance, although agreeing with him on the point disputed. He disapproved of his attempt to impose one form of church observances on all the churches; and declared that nothing was required but agreement in faith and in love; and that this, instead of being disturbed by outward differences, would shine forth more clearly through them. He recognised the right of every church in such matters to follow freely and independently its own ancient usage. To the authority of tradition in any single church by itself he objected the fact that tradition often originates in, and is propagated by, simplicity and ignorance.† In

fact, the tradition of St. Peter's visit to Rome, and his martyrdom there, whatever may be its historical value—which seems, indeed, extremely scanty—did not, in the opinion of early Catholics, imply that he had been the founder and first bishop of the Roman see; much less that, even assuming this to have been the case, Rome should have thereby acquired a paramount authority over all other metropolitan and apostolical churches. The sublime spirit which taught the apostles on a solemn occasion that none of them was to consider himself superior to his brethren in the fulfilment of their common ministry,^{*} was still pervading the Christian mind. Nor did the idea of Peter's pre-eminence over the other apostles act as a leading principle in the organisation of the Church till the Roman see began, in the third century and later, to be regarded, through its favourable external position in the capital of the empire, as the centre and head of western Christianity. And even then, the interference of the Roman in the local jurisdiction of other bishops, or their pretension to set themselves above the common authority of the whole Church, was often energetically opposed, not only in the East, but also within the pale of western Christianity. Thus Cyprian—although Rome was, in his view, "the chair of St. Peter and the fountain of sacerdotal unity"—did not hesitate to deny Bishop Stephen's authority, when he pronounced excommunication against the churches of North Africa and those of Asia Minor, for not conforming to his rule concerning baptism administered by heretics. The Bishop of Carthage, though a champion of the hierarchy, maintained, with the consent of two synods, that each bishop was free in the administration of his own diocese, that "no one should make himself a bishop of bishops;" and that the ancient Roman tradition, to which Stephen appealed, "had no validity against truth. Whence then," said he, in words which still retain all the freshness of reason and life for modern ears, "comes that tradition? Is it collected from the words of our Lord, and from the authority of the Gospels, or from the teaching and epistles of the apostles? Custom, which has crept in among some, ought not to hinder the truth from prevailing and triumphing; for custom without truth is but antiquity of error."†

AURELIO SAFFI.

* Luke ix. 46-48.

† See, on the same subject, "Ep., 55, ad Cornelium;" and "Ep., 71, ad Quintum." Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea, protested against Stephen and the pretensions of the Roman Church, in words even more severe than those used by Cyprian.

* "Epist. 5." See also "Epist. 11, ad Plebem."

† See Neander, I. 229.

THE HALF-SISTERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "MARK WARREN," ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

YOU are so unsophisticated, my dear; it is a good thing you have come to me," said Mrs. Hector Chillingham to her niece.

Mrs. Hector Chillingham was wife to the richest manufacturer in the city.

This rich manufacturer had done what many of his brethren had done before him: he had built himself a great house outside the city, and filled it with furniture as heavy and as expensive as he could buy. "The Grove" was the name of this suburban retreat. It was not pretty, it was not elegant, but it was very grand. It had suites of large lofty rooms, usually shut up, and their dearly-bought sofas and chairs covered up with brown holland. Only once a year were these solitudes peopled with human beings, and that was when Mr. and Mrs. Chillingham gave what was popularly called a "cram!" At all other periods, if you wanted the Chillinghams, you must have looked for them in a small back parlour at the rear of the house—a room which strongly resembled a certain other back parlour, behind a warehouse, in the narrowest and dingiest street in the city, where the early part of Mrs. Chillingham's life had been spent, and where, in those days, she had toiled and scraped to help her husband get his money together.

I do not know whether these circumstances account for the fact that Mrs. Hector Chillingham, when prosperity came, had emerged from her retirement the most grasping and penurious woman in the city. Other women have toiled and slaved, and yet have kept their hearts uncorroded. I fear the corroding element was in Mrs. Chillingham's nature from the first.

Her pinched face, thin lips, and eye keen almost to cunning, were not pleasant to look at. Her dress was spare and parsimonious. She kept her keys with the grip of a gaoler. She meted out the allowance of her servants with rigid and severe economy. Not a particle of any kind of substance whatever fell to the ground here. Yet, in being strictly just, she had forgotten to be generous.

Sophy, a young girl with flaxen curls, a soft downy cheek, and dressed in the deepest mourning, lifted up her head, and looked at her aunt without speaking.

Mrs. Hector was darning her husband's stockings, just as she used to do in the days of old. A ball of worsted and a huge pair of scissors, almost like shears, were lying beside her.

"You are very young, Sophy, to come into such a fortune. Now your papa is dead——"

Sophy's cheek turned very red, and the tears came into her eyes.

"Pray, aunt, don't; I can't bear it. Poor dear papa!" and she laid down her book to bury her face in her handkerchief and weep.

Mrs. Hector, without moving a muscle of her face, took up the shears, and cut off an end of the worsted.

"Come, come, my dear; it is quite time you got over it a little. We must all die some time, you know."

And again click went the shears.

"And really you must learn to exert yourself. There is a great responsibility upon your shoulders, Sophy. Ten thousand a year, and you a chit of sixteen! I assure you when I was sixteen I had not ten thousand pence!"

"Please don't talk about it, aunt. I don't want the money; I would rather poor dear papa——" and again came a gush of tender regretful sobs.

"Now, Sophy, dry your eyes and listen to me. You are under my care, and I mean to do my duty by you. It would never do to let you go on in the ridiculous way you have begun; you would get through your money in no time."

"What have I done, aunt?" asked Sophy, hurriedly, and a little frightened.

"My dear, you have done many silly things, but I don't wish to remind you of them; I only want to impress upon you certain rules of conduct which you would do well to remember. Are you listening, Sophy?"

"Yes, aunt."

And the wondering eyes—nice eyes they were, too—met the hard, stony gaze of Mrs. Hector Chillingham.

"Sophy, you must bear in mind that the majority of mankind are rogues and cheats!"

This assertion, flung out with extraordinary sharpness and acerbity, caused Sophy to start a little, and to open her eyes rather wider than they were before.

"I know it, Sophy, to my cost," added Mrs. Hector, conclusively.

Remembering the gorgeous wastes around her, with their hidden-up resources, one wonders how she could have been so bitter.

"Sophy, people who want to sell anything, as a rule, ask double what they mean to take; therefore, it is necessary to beat them down."

"Beat them down, aunt?" repeated Sophy, fearfully, and reminded of a policeman's truncheon.

Mrs. Hector was prevented from replying, which she would have done at some length, by a tap at the door. It was the housemaid.

"If you please, ma'am, Miss Percival has called."

"Very well," replied Mrs. Hector, compelled to defer, for a time, the important matter of Sophy's education; "she can come in here; I am quite at liberty."

"Who is Miss Percival, aunt?" asked Sophy.

"The young woman who does plain sewing for me."

She had scarce said the words when, without any further announcement, there entered Helen.

Her dress was plain to the utmost rigour of simplicity. There was not an ornament of any kind about her. Yet there was, in her manner and appearance, so unmistakably the air of a gentlewoman, that Sophy rose, and stood waiting to be introduced. She wondered her aunt did not rise too; but Mrs. Hector kept her seat, nor did she attempt the least show of introduction. Still, Sophy, on whom the calm, sensible, "good face," as she afterwards called it, had made a visible impression, could not find it in her heart to dispense with all civility.

She said, addressing the "young woman who does plain sewing for me,"—

"Pray take a chair, Miss Percival." And so saying, she brought one forward, and placed it near the fire.

Helen thanked her, and sat down. Perfectly calm and self-possessed was Helen.

"Reduced, no doubt," thought Sophy, pityingly; "I am sure she is a lady."

"Well," asked Mrs. Chillingham, glancing keenly at Helen, "have you brought back the shirts?"

Helen had a satchel in her hand; she opened it, and took out a parcel neatly folded up. Mrs. Chillingham received it from her without the least acknowledgment. Then came poor Helen's ordeal.

Mrs. Chillingham, with the air of a woman who takes nothing for granted, opened the parcel. One by one, she examined the shirts minutely, stitch by stitch. Here and there she pulled a seam, to see if it would hold, and her scrutiny of the buttons and the button-holes was microscopic.

"I wish aunt would not be so rude," thought Sophy.

Helen sat, without flinching, through this proceeding.

Little did Mrs. Chillingham know the weariness and painfulness with which many of those stitches were put in! Yet Mrs. Chillingham had herself known poverty in its most bitter form. She had herself risen early, and late taken rest. How was it that she had so little sympathy for others?

Presently she laid the work upon the table, and said, her hard, keen eyes, fixed on Helen, "You want your money, I suppose?"

Sophy gave a little shudder. But Helen was by no means discomposed. She replied, thankfully, even cheerfully, "If you please, Mrs. Chillingham."

She was thinking of her sick father, and of the comforts she could buy him. It was so sweet to work for her father!

Mrs. Chillingham had never known such a sweetness. Her father had died in abject poverty: some said in the workhouse; but that report had been hushed up since the Chillinghams rose to prosperity. At any rate, the end and aim of Mrs. Chillingham's labours had been *self*; and self has it not in its power to diffuse that sweet sensation Helen was experiencing. The selfish are, of all mankind, the least happy. She drew out her purse—a purse full of gold—and laid down a sovereign.

"Can you give me change, Miss Percival?"

"I am afraid not," faltered Helen.

"That is tiresome! You ought to be provided with silver. Surely you have half-a-crown?"

"How very odious my aunt has become!" thought Sophy.

"I wanted to tell you, Miss Percival," continued Mrs. Chillingham, searching in her purse for silver, "that I find I can have the work done cheaper."

Helen looked at her in surprise.

"Yes, I can; I cannot afford to pay more than the market's price. Times are very bad just now, Miss Percival."

"They are, indeed!" replied Helen; a touch of pathos in her voice.

Witness her dying father,—her poverty-stricken home!

"For the future, I intend to pay at a lower rate. If you are disposed to accept the terms, you can continue the same as usual; if not, I shall trouble you to find other employment. Here is your money." And counting it shilling by shilling, with the utmost exactness, she pushed it towards her.

Helen took it up, and put it in her purse. As she did so, a tear rolled distinctly down her cheek. A moment after, she said, in her usual placid tone, "I should be glad to think it over, if you will allow me."

"Certainly. There will be nothing for you to take back to-day. The work wants cutting out, and I never allow any one to do that but myself; the waste in cutting out is enormous! If you think fit, you can call next week."

"Thank you."

She rose, calm and undemonstrative; and having made a courteous movement to both the ladies, withdrew.

As she was walking towards the entrance of the grounds, a patter of light footsteps came after her.

"Miss Percival, will you stop, if you please?—Miss Percival!"

Helen stopped, and turned round. A pretty little figure in deep mourning, with flaxen curls streaming from under her hat, came hurrying up.

"Please, will you stop? I'm Sophy Hensman—Mrs. Chillingham's niece," and the panting figure stopped to recover breath.

Helen looked quietly into Miss Hensman's face. There was not a trace of emotion of any kind in Helen's countenance.

"I know you are a lady! I can see it in a minute; and it's a great shame!" cried Sophy, eagerly and volubly; "and she is as rich as I am!"

Helen's face was imperturbable in its gravity.

"I know you are in trouble," continued Sophy, coming close up, and laying her hand on Helen's—Helen accepting the act, rather than reciprocating it; "I know you are, and would you—pray don't be offended with me—would you let me come and see you, and—help you?"

Helen's attitude assumed a degree of stiffness, that checked the volubility and eagerness of the other.

"We should be glad to see you, Miss Hensman," said she, coldly; "but my poor father is ill,—and—"

"Your father ill!" exclaimed Sophy, with a burst of feeling that alarmed quiet, self-possessed Helen. "Oh, my poor father is dead!" and she began to weep and to sob convulsively.

Helen, at first, looked frightened; then her face softened into an expression of tender sympathy, that changed its whole character.

"Poor thing!" said she, pityingly, "poor thing!" And the chord, ever the most sensitive in her own heart, thrilled with emotion.

Now she pressed the hand which had lain unheeded upon her own.

"He is dead," continued Sophy; "and I shall never be quite happy, any more! He was so good! so kind! so—"

And here she burst again into a fit of weeping.

By-and-by she recovered, and said, with all the simplicity of a child, "I am very rich, Miss Percival; you can hardly think how rich!"

"Indeed!" said Helen, kindly.

"Yes, and papa told me, on his death-bed,"—here came an hysterical sob—"he told me to be sure and do all the good I could with my money. I mean to do good; I mean to spend all my life in helping people in distress."

The stiffness returned to Helen. She withdrew her hand, and said, with a return of her former coolness—

"You are quite right, Miss Hensman. But it is beginning to rain; had you not better return to the house?"

"Yes, directly. Dear Miss Percival, say I may come to see you!"

"I shall be glad, I am sure," replied Helen; not, however, with any degree of cordiality.

"We cannot receive visitors," thought Helen, as she walked towards the city; "and, it may be pride, but I don't like—I never could endure, that word *help*! I would rather!" added Helen, the energy of the thought causing the colour to flush into her face, and her eye to sparkle—"I would rather work my fingers to the bone!"

CHAPTER V.

"I wish Helen would come back! Papa is more tiresome than ever, this morn'g!"

And Dolores stretched her hands over the slender fire in the sitting-room.

"People always get fractious like, towards the last, Miss Dolores," replied the charwoman, as she passed from one article of furniture to another, a duster in her hand.

"Towards the last! Whatever do you mean? What last?" exclaimed Dolores, peevishly, and turning round.

"I mean the last of all, Miss Dolores. Just when they're a going to die!"

The rosy lips of Dolores parted with a look of wonder, and she kept her eyes fixed on Susan for a

minute or two in silence. Then her face dimpled over with that delicious sunny smile, which was one of her peculiar fascinations.

"Why, you silly old thing! Who says he is going to die?"

"Miss Dolores, the doctor, when he come last—"

"Don't tell me about the doctor! I know what to do with papa! I'll take him back to Spain!"

The old woman—for she was old, and had one of those wrinkled, furrowed faces which tell tales of hard usage and rough work, and not much happiness—the old woman shook her head.

"I'll take him back to Spain, Susan, when this horrid, miserable, wretched, foggy, rainy winter is over! I know being here will kill him, as a natural consequence; but my country, my dear, bright, warm, beautiful Spain!" and she began to pirouette round and round the room with all the grace and lightness of a sylph, "I wonder how the dear little house is going on, Susan, and the orange-grove, and those darling old mountains. Oh, yes! We'll go!—we'll go!" and her voice deepened into a rich, musical cadence, as she half said, half sung the words, "And papa will get quite well! and as brave, and as handsome as ever! and we shall be ever so happy, Susan, all the rest of our lives, as the story-books say!"

"Leastways, there's his bell," said the old woman, quietly, and picking up the duster that Dolores had pirouetted out of her hand.

Dolores flushed with her exertions, and looking beautiful enough to rouse the enthusiasm even of an old Susan, glided up-stairs, her feet appearing scarce to touch the ground. In a few seconds she had reached the invalid's chamber.

"Is Helen come?" said a feeble, querulous voice from behind the closely-drawn curtains of the bed.

"No, papa. Do you want anything?"

She drew back the curtain. The wintry daylight fell on her slight figure, her flushed face, and lovely flowing hair. The poor dim eyes yonder regarded her, as they always did, with affectionate admiration. But her beauty, her grace, her numberless fascinations, were not altogether sufficient for his present needs. He was fast sinking into the deadly faintness of exhaustion. It was Helen he really wanted.

"Dolores, I must have something. Is there any wine down-stairs?"

"No, papa."

This was said with her usual glibness, and as she was smoothing her hair at the glass.

"No wine!"

"You had the last this morning, papa dear, before I awoke. Helen said she was going to bring some more back," replied Dolores, still glibly.

But his tone was one of distress.

"My dear, I must have something. Get me some beef-tea, quick, Dolores. And, Dolores, do see that I have a good fire," added the invalid, beseechingly.

"They are such nasty great lumps," grumbled Dolores, making a frightful din at the coal-box.

Oh, Helen! Helen! how much thou wast needed!

"Be quick, Dolores! and, for gracious' sake, give over!" cried the invalid, stopping his ears.

"As if Miss Helen hadn't set it ready in the pantry, skimmed, and everything! And all to do is to hot it in yon skillet," replied Susan, when, Dolores, helpless as an infant, flew to her.

"Hot it! Oh, Susan, do it for me! there's a good, Susan! I'm certain to spill half on the floor, and the other half in the fire. Do it, and I'll give you a ribbon for your cap, Susan!"

How could any one resist the blandishments of Miss Dolores?

"Why, you see, as I'm here best part of the day, I was going to clean up the places a bit," said Susan; "and if you come a hindering—"

"Oh, it won't take you a minute. Where's the skillet? As if my arms wouldn't drop off, if I tried to reach up there. Reach it down, Susan, and I'll lay the cloth on the tray, and fetch the salt, and carry it up-stairs beautifully!"

"Catch Miss Helen a forgetting anything!" muttered Susan, as Dolores found the tray, and the salt, and the spoon, all ready to her hand.

"Ah! she's uncommon handsome; but she isn't Miss Helen, nor won't be yet awhile," added the old woman, as she turned the toast round and round at the fire.

Dolores occupied the interval in looking out of the window. A number of gentlemen had just galloped by at the end of the field, on their way to the place where the hounds met that morning.

"Now, Miss Dolores, it's ready."

Dolores did not come from the window immediately. When she did, her colour was heightened, and a curious smile played about her mouth. She seemed abstracted, and as if her thoughts had taken the opportunity of wandering elsewhere.

"Come, Miss Dolores, your poor pa will be sinking through his bed for want."

Thus adjured, Dolores, the momentary abstraction gone, came gaily forward.

"Give it to me, Susan. All right! I'll carry it as

steady as if I were an old woman, Susan;" and, with the tray in her hand, she stepped nimbly up-stairs. Her face was joyous, her eyes danced with glee. Once she laughed outright; but this causing her to spill the beef-tea, she grew calmer, and at length, without any serious disaster, she appeared at the bedside of her father.

"Now, papa, here it is, smoking hot."

"Thank you, my dear. Will you put my pillows more comfortable? Since Helen went, no one has seen to them, and they are as hard as bullets."

"All right, papa! I'll shake the pillows. There! there! there!"

"My dear, you make such a terrible wind!" said the invalid, shivering. "I wish!—but, never mind! Give me the beef-tea."

"Here it is, papa; and, then, will you get up?" asked Dolores, prematurely, and without an atom of consideration.

"My dear, I am so ill this morning. What is the weather? Does it snow still?"

"No, papa. It is what people in England call *slushy*—a kind of bog under foot, and streams of water running on all sides. Not a nice day, papa."

"Have you been out, Dolores?"

"I!" and she laughed a mellow, musical laugh, and glanced down at her dainty embroidered slipper.

"No, papa."

"But Helen is out, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes! Helen is out, of course," replied Dolores, with the utmost coolness.

As much as to say, "It does not in the least signify to Helen, either snow, or rain, or slush."

He lay a few minutes, feebly sipping the beef-tea.

"I don't think I shall get up to-day." And he sighed wearily as he said it.

How tenderly Helen would have soothed him!—how she would have fed him with her own hands, as if he had been a child!—how soft she would have made his pillows!—how warm and bright his fire!—how comfortable his sick chamber!

(To be continued.)

THE STORY OF A FEATHER.



HAVE already related the narrative of my troubles consequent on the purloining of my grandfather's feather. Let me now present its history, as detailed to me by the good old man himself. It is thus he commenced it:—

"About the middle of the fourteenth century, in the heart of Brittany, stood an old castle, flanked by enormous towers, and surrounded by a moat, in which water had lain stagnant for years. One day its repose was disturbed. Sounds of tumultuous joy resounded on all sides. It might have been supposed that preparations were making for a tournament, had not the open doors of the chapel shown that a grand religious ceremonial was about to take place within.

"A brilliant cortège soon made its appearance. It was announced by a flourish of trumpets, upon which the pages, unfurling their banners, filed off on the terrace. The heralds followed, crying, 'Largesse!' Then came the judges of the field and their pages, then a crowd of knights, fully armed, followed by their pages and men-at-arms. In the centre of this cortège, and distinguished above all by his noble bearing, a young man walked with head erect and confident step, beside a knight clad in complete armour. These were the Sire Du Guesclin and his son. This was a solemn day for the former, who was going to introduce his son, who walked so proudly at his side, to the Order of Chivalry.

"When the cortège entered the chapel, the

knights took their places according to their rank. Young Du Guesclin advanced, and knelt down a few paces from the altar. His father stood on his right, carrying a drawn sword, and on his left the Sire de Kérance, who had undertaken to act as godfather, and whose office it would be to fasten the scarf and the golden spurs on the new-made knight. After divine service was concluded, which was listened to with deep devotion, the attendant knights fastened on the young man's armour, and then his father gave him the accolade. No sooner had this been done than two men-at-arms entered the chapel, carrying, in a silver basin, a peacock covered with gorgeous plumage, which they placed upon the altar.

"In the midst of this joyous assemblage a young man was to be seen, who with sorrowful heart and tearful eyes had taken part in the ceremony. His strong affection for young Bertrand was well known, and his feeble frame and simple dress made him an object of general compassion. Guy Raymond was a poor Norman student. His father, ruined by Lombard usurers, had only sufficient left out of an ample fortune to pay for the education of his son. On his death, Guy was adopted by the Du Guesclin family, and was brought up with Bertrand, for whom he felt a love approaching to idolatry. He looked forward to the day of his friend's knighthood with sorrow, for he knew it would lead to their separation.

"Guy had followed Bertrand into the chapel, where, during the ceremony, he remained motionless, with his eyes fixed on his friend; but when the new-made knight had pronounced the solemn oath, and when with lavish hand, he had scattered gold amongst the crowd, he approached, and said, in a voice trembling with emotion, 'Bertrand, will you not leave some remembrance with me before we part?'

"At the sound of his voice the young knight Bertrand turned, and gazed on him with intense affection; then, returning to the altar, and plucking from the peacock which lay there one of its most gorgeous feathers, cried, with tears in his eyes, 'Guy, take this feather as a remembrance of your friend. I vow that I will never forget you.'

"This was the first and brightest period in the history of my feather," continued my grandfather, with emotion. "Poor Guy Raymond continued a lonely inmate of the old castle, while Bertrand was distinguishing himself in the service of his king and country. When, from time to time, news of some splendid exploit found its way to the castle, his languid eyes flashed with joy; and, taking up his missal, he would open it at the page where lay his beloved feather, and, tenderly and reverently gazing at it, murmur, 'This was his precious gift!'

"Sad news at last reached Brittany. Du Guesclin was a prisoner in the hands of the Spaniards. Raymond was inconsolable. On the following morning he left the castle, habited in a coat of hair-cloth, the collar bordered with shells, and carrying a pilgrim's staff in his hand, surmounted by a gourd.

"He was on the road to Spain. A long and difficult

journey lay before the poor sickly youth. He was supported by the hope of seeing once more his beloved friend through exertion and fatigue which he otherwise could not have borne. When, at last, he threw himself into his arms, he was more dead than alive. His own sufferings were forgotten in his desire to serve Bertrand. How was he to do it? He would willingly have given his life to be able to say, 'Bertrand, you are free!' He longed to take his place; but knew the offer to do so would be spurned indignantly. But there was no real cause for despondency. During Du Guesclin's captivity, he had met with the treatment due to his high position; and, thanks to the friendship of Don Garcia del Basto, a Spanish grandee, who exerted himself in his behalf, he obtained his liberty before long on his parole, and without ransom. The word of a Du Guesclin was of more value than gold.

"Guy Raymond, supremely happy, accompanied his friend back to Brittany; but he had left a treasure in Spain. When Don Garcia announced the prisoner's liberty, Guy, kissing his feather, and watering it with his tears, said to the Spaniard, 'Accept, my lord, this pledge of my eternal gratitude. I would give my heart's blood willingly to repay you for the service you have rendered the Constable.'

"The poor Norman youth did not long survive the hardships he had endured; but he had the happiness of dying in the arms of his beloved and now eminent friend, who long and deeply deplored his loss.

"I cannot give you a minute history of my feather during the next two centuries; it must be sufficient to say that it was handed down from father to son in the family of Don Garcia del Basto.

"At the conclusion of the sixteenth century, the kingdom of Spain and the earldom of Flanders passed from the Emperor Charles V. to his son Philip. This prince, at heart a true Spaniard, conceived a project of uniting both kingdoms into one. Philip sent the ferocious Duke of Alva into Flanders as the minister of his cruelties. One of the officers who accompanied the duke was Don Henriquez Duarte del Basto, a descendant of Don Garcia. He fell valiantly defending the Fort of Brielle, which was besieged by the 'Gueux' (as the insurgents were called); and the peacock's feather which ornamented the crest of his helmet was transferred to the plebeian bonnet of their leader, an adventurous pirate named Lamark. From that period till the reign of Louis XIV. it remained in Holland in the possession of his children.

"Amongst the numerous pirates who assisted the Dutch Admiral de Ruyter, was one of the name of Martin, who was distinguished by many heroic actions. Often, during the long wintry evenings, he would sit with his children on his knees, amusing them with tales of his prowess, and then would he exhibit, amongst the trophies of his career, the poniard of Lamark, and the peacock's feather which had ornamented his bonnet.

"At length a day arrived on which he embarked in a small cutter, accompanied by a few brave com-

panions. At dawn of the second day, the pirate perceived that his vessel was surrounded by several ships carrying the French flag. Martin rushed to the prow of his vessel, and, grasping an enormous hatchet, waited the arrival of the enemy, resolving to sell his life as dearly as possible; and his companions stood at his side, determined to share his fate.

"It was impossible for a cutter such as Martin's to resist the attack which ensued. When half-full of water she was boarded by the French, who were commanded by Captain Rochart. They cleared her of everything, and transported her exhausted and bleeding crew to their ship.

"Martin was thrown, severely wounded, on the deck. After some time, he recovered his consciousness, and requested that the most gallant man belonging to the crew might be sent to him for the purpose of hearing his dying wishes. This request was complied with: a hardy old steersman, who bore the marks of many a wound, approached him. Martin grasped his hand.

"To you," he whispered, "I confide my treasures. Take this box; it contains a poniard and a peacock's feather. They are relics of two heroes, Lamark and Du Guesclin."

"My young friend," said my grandfather, after a short pause, "we now pass a great gulf, and have arrived at the period of which Napoleon became the hero, and in which I myself bore an humble part. I was then a young man, and followed Pichegru's army in its triumphant course through the Pays Bas.

"I remember our halting one night before the small town of L—. I fell asleep, exhausted by fatigue, but was awakened by a voice close at my ear, whispering, 'Oh, sir, come quickly to a poor dying woman!' I started up and followed my conductor, without a moment's delay, to where the poor sufferer lay. She showed but slight signs of life. She was young, had been beautiful, and evidently belonged to a respectable class of society.

"Some soldiers who stood by told me they had seen her wandering about close to our advanced posts, and that the vidette, taking her for a spy, had fired on her.

"I caused her to be carried to my tent, and, on examining her wound, I found that though she had recovered her consciousness, it was fatal.

"I spoke to her with earnestness, directing her to the Christian's only hope, and requested her to tell me her dying wishes.

"I have suffered much," she faltered; "and now the hour of my deliverance draws near. Before I die, however, I wish to tell you some of the events of my life. My name was Ann Rochart. When I was an infant my family was driven from France for its Huguenot principles. Two years ago I married a young officer, whose family had accompanied mine into exile. Oh, how happy my life was then! But, alas! one fatal day my husband received orders to join his regiment, and march with the Prussian army, which was on the point of setting out to lay siege to Lille.

We had always retained a strong attachment to France. Holland, though the country of our adoption, we could not love. My husband refused to fight against his native land, and became, in consequence, an object of suspicion. He was denounced and thrown into prison. For some time I hoped to be able to save him; but when Lille fell into your hands, the governor, before giving up the keys of the town, caused my unfortunate husband to be executed. I escaped a similar fate by flight, and at the moment when I was about to put myself under the protection of my countrymen I was struck down by a French bullet."

"The poor sufferer then opened a satchel of green satin, which she wore in her bosom; and, drawing from it a peacock's feather, she presented it to me, saying, 'I leave this feather, which has belonged to heroes—to a Frenchman.' Then, continuing to speak with great difficulty, she told me the history of this feather. Shortly afterwards she died in my arms. The next day we were masters of Holland; and, a month after, I re-crossed the frontier, and carried back to France the proud recollection of the heroism of my countrymen and—my valued peacock's feather."

My grandfather ceased, and remained silent for some time, looking at me, as if anxious to find out, from the expression of my countenance, what effect the story had produced on me.

It made a permanent impression on my mind. Little did I know, when I first saw the Peacock's Feather, and handled it so rudely, that it had deserved to wave for ever on the helmet of chivalry.

SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.

1. A wicked man, who boasted laurels never won.
2. He, a progenitor of Jesse's royal son.
3. A king who for his infant's death in sackcloth grieved.
4. He who "the wages of unrighteousness" received.
5. He who, when ministering, the holy garments wore.
6. A man of "mighty deeds," well versed in Egypt's lore.
7. A "blameless" woman, mother of a righteous son.
8. A maiden, whom a lover's seven years' service won.
9. A man whose son hid the accursed thing.
10. One chosen for a post of honour by a king.
11. He who, for selfish ends, Paul's presence often sought.
12. A cunning craftsman, who was by the Spirit taught.
13. He who the words of wicked men with sorrow hears.
14. A man who judged Israel three-and-twenty years.
15. A wicked king, who purchased Samaria's hill.
16. She who, when all were bustling round, sat calm and still.
17. A brother who his birthright shamefully did sell.
18. A king who through an open lattice window fell.
19. A king who in despair committed suicide.
20. An only son, at once his parents' hope and pride.
21. A saint who dwelt at Rome, saluted by St. Paul.
22. A prophet sent to blame a sinner for his fall.
23. He who "to seek the law of God" prepared his heart.
24. He who with Pekah against Judah took a part.

This lesson learn, that when your conscience knows no ease,
You should approach the mercy seat with words like these.